

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
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S E C R E T STATE 104702 TOSEC 040068

EXDIS

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM BAGHDAD DATED MAY 4, 1977 SENT
SECSTATE WASHDC IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

S E C R E T BAGHDAD 0743

EXDIS

NEA FOR ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IZ
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE TO GOI ON IMPROVING RELATIONS

1. AS THE TIME APPROACHES FOR ME TO MAKE MY FAREWELL
CALLS IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, I BELIEVE TIME MIGHT
NOW BE RIPE FOR ME TO TAKE A LIMITED INITIATIVE TOWARDS
IMPROVEMENT OF U.S.-IRAQI RELATIONS. OUR PROMPT
AND IMPRESSIVE RESPONSE TO GOI'S REQUEST FOR HIGH
QUALITY MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR SADDAM HUSSEIN HAS
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CREATED, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING, AN OPENING WHICH
I BELIEVE WE SHOULD ATTEMPT TO EXPLOIT. FACT THAT
REQUEST WAS MADE THROUGH ME HAS ELEVATED MY STANDING
IN EYES OF GOI BUREAUCRACY AND MAY OPEN SOME DOORS
THAT WERE CLOSED TO ME IN THE PAST. IN ANY CASE, MY

APPROACHING DEPARTURE MEANS THAT I WOULD HAVE LITTLE TO LOSE IN UNDERTAKING AN INITIATIVE EVEN IF IT IS REJECTED BY GOI.

2. I THEREFORE PROPOSE THAT I BE INSTRUCTED TO CONVEY MESSAGE AT HIGHEST POSSIBLE LEVEL IN FOREIGN MINISTRY WHICH WOULD INCLUDE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. CARTER ADMINISTRATION IS SINCERELY INTERESTED IN IMPROVING U.S.-IRAQI RELATIONS AND IS READY TO RESUME DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH IRAQ AT A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE TIME WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS.

B. AS ONE STEP IN IMPROVING THE DIALOGUE LOOKING TOWARD AN EVENTUAL RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS, SECRETARY VANCE WOULD BE WILLING TO MAKE A SHORT STOP IN BAGHDAD DURING COURSE OF HIS NEXT MIDDLE EAST TRIP FOR A MEETING WITH SADDAM HUSSEIN.

C. DURING THIS MEETING SEC. VANCE WILL GIVE PERSONAL ASSURANCE TO SADDAM HUSSEIN THAT USG IS NOT NOW SUPPORTING AND WILL NOT IN FUTURE SUPPORT KURDISH DISSIDENT ACTIVITY AGAINST GOVT. OF IRAQ.

D. SEC. VANCE WOULD ALSO BE INTERESTED IN HEARING GOI'S VIEWS ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT AND ON ITS ULTIMATE RESOLUTION, AS WELL AS ON ANY OTHER ISSUES SADDAM HUSSEIN MIGHT WISH TO DISCUSS. SEC. VANCE WOULD, OF COURSE, BE WILLING TO EXPLAIN THE UNITED STATES POSITION ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT AND
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ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

E. DURING THE MEETING MODALITIES FOR AN EVENTUAL RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS COULD BE DISCUSSED. ONE POSSIBILITY WOULD BE AN UNDERSTANDING IN PRINCIPLE TO RESUME RELATIONS WITH THE SPECIFIC DATE TO BE FIXED BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT AT A LATER TIME. THIS APPROACH WOULD BE SIMILAR TO THE ONE USED IN RESTORING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN ALGERIA AND THE UNITED STATES.

3. FROM HUSSEIN'S POINT OF VIEW, SUCH A PROPOSAL WOULD HAVE SOME OBVIOUS ATTRACTIONS. IRAQIS WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO RECEIVE ASSURANCE OF U.S. NON-SUPPORT FOR KURDISH DISSIDENTS. SUGGESTION THAT SEC. VANCE WOULD LIKE TO LISTEN TO IRAQ'S POINT OF VIEW WOULD BE VERY FLATTERING TO HUSSEIN WHO HAS

CRAVING TO PLAY A MORE IMPORTANT ROLE ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE.

4. AT SAME TIME,IRAQIS ARE HIGHLY SUSPICIOUS PEOPLE, AND WOULD NO DOUBT SUSPECT A TRAP. THEY ARE QUITE CONSCIOUS OF FACT THAT BAATHI REGIME HAS GIVEN USG LITTLE REASON TO BE NICE TO THEM AND WOULD PROBABLY WONDER WHAT WE REALLY HAD IN MIND. SADDAM MAY ALSO REASON THAT HIS INTERNAL SECURITY SITUATION AND HIS ALWAYS DELICATE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION COULD NOT NOW STAND THE STRAIN OF AN OFFICIAL VISIT OF THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE WHICH WOULD CERTAINLY TRIGGER AN AVALANCHE OF SPECULATION AND RUMORS ABOUT NEW IRAQI POLICIES TOWARD THE UNITED STATES.

5. ON BALANCE, HOWEVER, I BELIEVE THAT WE WOULD HAVE LITTLE TO LOSE AND MUCH TO GAIN BY MAKING THE SUGGESTED DEMARCHE. IF IRAQIS DO NOT RESPOND
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POSITIVELY WE WOULD THEN HAVE AN ADDITIONAL REASON TO DELAY ASSIGNMENT OF MY REPLACEMENT AND THUS SIGNAL TO GOI THAT WE BELIEVE IT IS NOW THEIR TURN TO MAKE THE NEXT MOVE. FACT THAT THEY HAD TURNED DOWN MY APPROACH WOULD UNDERLINE THE MESSAGE.
WILEY
UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

SECRET

NNN

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